



Prayer: Week Four

Asaph: How to Pray through Doubt

Introduction

JC Ryle, *Do You Pray*

Stanley Gale, *Why Do We Pray*

Joel Beeke, *How Can I Cultivate Private Prayer*

- Maintain the Priority of Prayer
- Cultivate Continual Prayer
- Organize for Prayer
 - As Christian men, we should work hard to be faithful in _____ prayer (Nehemiah 1:1-11, 9:1-38).
 - As Christian men, we should work hard to be faithful in _____ prayer (Nehemiah 2:4 ...13:31).

Paul Tautges, *Brass Heavens*

“Imagine if all our prayers were answered swiftly and we never had to wait. It would be as if we each had a genie in a bottle who gives endless wishes. Our prayers would be more like commands than requests, and God would be rightly called our servant in heaven. We would never endure any lingering, ongoing, bothersome challenges and difficulties. Everyone would be healthy, wealthy, and biblically wise. We would feel great all the time, our jobs would be wonderful, the weather report would always be accurate, and even civil governments would work right. We would be living as if there had never been any original sin, as if we were still in the garden before Adam and Eve fell. And that means we would

never have any reason to change. Unfortunately, in nearly every case, _____ is necessary for our _____. God often leaves our prayers unanswered so that we might become increasingly conformed to the image of his Son. Unanswered prayer is a gift from God for our growth – in holiness and in every other good and godly way – and sometimes it has nothing to do with whether we are hanging on to any of the sins described in chapters three through seven.”

(Paul Tautges, *Brass Heavens*)

Asaph: How to Pray through Doubt

- **Who was Asaph?**

- Asaph was a member of the priestly tribe of _____ (1 Chronicles 6:39-47).
- Asaph was involved in leading _____ at the tabernacle, and his instrument of choice was the cymbals (1 Chronicles 6:31-32, 15:19, 16:4-5).
- Asaph was also a teacher who _____ under the direction of David (1 Chronicles 25:1-2).
- Asaph fathered a family of _____ who served the LORD (Nehemiah 7:6-7, 44).
- Asaph was _____ as a man of worship, faith, and obedience (Nehemiah 12:46, 2 Chronicles 20:13-17, 29:12-19).
- Asaph was the author of numerous _____ (Psalm 50, 73-83).
- Asaph was a spiritual giant who struggled with _____.

- **The Outline of Psalm 73**

- Section One: _____ (Psalm 73:1)
- Section Two: _____ (Psalm 73:2-15)
- Section Three: _____ (Psalm 73:16-20)
- Section Four: _____ (Psalm 73:21-22)
- Section Five: _____ (Psalm 73:23-28)

“Based on this outline, the big idea is obvious. It’s OK to struggle with doubts. It’s even OK to question God. But you must begin with the truth, center on the truth, and end with the truth.” (Landon Coleman, *Pray Better*)

- **Section One: Truth (Psalm 73:1)**

- Asaph started his prayer by stating a truth that didn't _____ true (Psalm 73:1).

- **Section Two: Confusion (Psalm 73:2-15)**

- Asaph fell into confusion when his _____ was misplaced (Psalm 73:2-15).

- **Section Three: Truth (Psalm 73:16-20)**

- Asaph refocused his heart on God through _____ (Psalm 73:16-20).

- **Section Four: Confession (Psalm 73:21-22)**

- Asaph began to see _____ clearly once he saw God clearly (Psalm 73:21-22).

- **Section Five: Truth (Psalm 73:23-28)**

- Asaph ended his prayer with truth about _____ (Psalm 73:23-28).

- Asaph recognized God's _____.
- Asaph trusted in God's _____.
- Asaph affirmed God's all-surpassing _____.
- Asaph declared God's certain _____.
- Asaph rested in God as his _____.
- Asaph promised to _____ others about God.

“Psalm 73 is the prayer of a godly man who struggled with doubt. It’s also a pattern to follow when doubts and questions assail our faith. Is it OK to be honest with God? Certainly, but some thoughts are better left unsaid. Rather than rant and rave against our Creator like an ignorant beast, we must preach the truth to ourselves, and we must focus our hearts on God through worship. When we do this we will join Asaph in seeing God as infinitely beautiful and glorious. When you see God in this way, prayer becomes easy.” (Landon Coleman, *Pray Better*)

Application

“The Bible says it. I believe it. That settles it.” (Someone Who Has No Life Experience and Who Has Spent No Time Thinking about Anything)

- You will _____ experience doubt in your life as a Christian (Genesis 3:1, Romans 8:18-30).

“Doubt is a powerful and mysterious force. It is built mostly on questions, but those stem from a huge range of human realities: fear, anger, logic, intuition, and observation, to name a few. Because of these complexities, doubt can be either motivating or enervating. It can cripple or it can restore. … When unbelieving doubt poses a question, it is not interested in the answer for any reason other than to disprove it. Unbelieving doubt is on the attack. It is much more interested in the devastating effect of the question itself to erode the asker’s belief and hope in what is being questioned. The asked it not asking to learn; she is asking to devastate. She does not want to progress to an answer. She wants to show that there is no answer. Unbelieving doubt is not working toward anything but merely against belief. These doubts are the wild monsters that wreck faith … What makes our doubt ‘believing doubt’ is what we do with it. Unbelieving doubt is that which destroys fragile beliefs. Believing doubt is that which strengthens our beliefs … Believing doubt will always anchor in God’s _____ and _____ as unshakable and then take on questions that harass and attack. Sometimes these are emotional questions; other times they are philosophical or biblical.”

(Barnabas Piper, *Help My Unbelief*)

- We need to acknowledge that when we wrestle with doubt, the _____ is always with us, not with God (Psalm 14:1, 53:1, Romans 1:18-32).
- If we want to overcome doubt, we need to rely on the _____.
_____.
 - _____ (Daily)
 - _____ (Scheduled and Spontaneous)
 - _____ (Weekly)

“Believers have three enemies who constantly preach lies. The world preaches, telling us we need money and possessions to be satisfied. Our flesh preaches, telling us sin will bring more pleasure than a clean conscience. The devil himself preaches, telling us that God doesn’t care about our issues and problems. Day in and day out, lies are constantly being preached to the heart of every believer. Your pastor gets thirty minutes a week. Your Sunday school teacher gets another thirty minutes. The rest of the week it’s a steady stream of lies.” (Landon Coleman, *Pray Better*)

- Yes, God _____ your mind and your heart. No, that doesn’t mean you should say anything and everything in prayer (Psalm 73:15).
- *Other Prayers Relating to Doubt in the Bible*
 - *Jeremiah Prays about Land (Jeremiah 32)*
 - *A Father Prayed for Faith (Mark 9:24)*
 - *John the Baptist Questions Jesus (Luke 7:18-23)*
 - *James Encourages Confident Prayer (James 1)*